

Prepare for the Child Luke 1:8-23

Big Idea: We should prepare for Jesus' coming by repenting and asking others to repent

Fallen Nature: We believe that we are not in need of anything significant to repent from.

Desired result: Restored relationships with both God and family

Intro: Deb's Daddy came. He is a special guest and so we did some special things. We had as many family come as could. He would be there. We increased our ability to feed more people... got a few more chairs. We stored up on Breyer's ice cream, because he likes it and we did a little extra projects around the house... he would be there. Everyone in his family wants to honor him. So everyone made some special effort to enjoy him. This is the first time he came without Deb's Mom. This made it sweet even in the pain.

Trans: God was about to announce the coming of His Son to earth. Jesus didn't just show up. God orchestrated a preparation.

This morning we will look at the ways God made His preparation announcement and ask how He might prepare us again to remember His Son's coming.

I. He Prepares us in the Context of Service Luke 1:5-5-11

Slide 1: Maybe a worship leader in front of a group of worshipers with their hands raised

- A. He was serving according to His lineage - he was in the priestly line v5
- B. He was serving according to His righteousness v6
- C. He was serving according to His duty v8
- D. He was serving according to the will of God v8b (chosen by lot)

Teach: God speaks to us often while we are serving.

Illus: VBS class - which lesson meant the most to you. - 5th graders - God spoke to me that I could lead others in ministry to Him

Appli: If you want to hear the voice of God, then serve. Serve according to your giftedness.

II. God Prepares Us in the Context of Prayer Luke 1:9-11

Slide 2: Praying Hands

- A. His particular duty was to burn incense
 - 1. Morning and evening
 - 2. The incense was associated with prayer

Slide 3: Psalm 141:1b-2a Hear my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense

Slide 4: Rev 5:8 - can you please highlight the words, "incense, which are the prayers"

- B. The people outside were all praying v10
 - 1. They are identified as worshippers
 - 2. They were praying at the time of the burning of the incense
- C. The angel appeared in the midst of the burning of incense

Slide 5: Can you please show a top view of the temple - it should at least show the holy place, the alter of incense and the holy of holies I want to show how close the alter of incense was to the holy of holies

1. His duty of burning incense took him as close to the Holy of Holies as any man could possibly get except the high priest once per year.

2. God ordained that Zachariah would hear the voice of the angel in the presence of the holy of holies while serving as the leader of prayer

Teach: God speaks to us and prepares us while we are praying

Illus: Group of Men met together to pray for various countries. Their knowledge grew. Their love grew. Their call to serve grew.

Appli: If you want to hear the voice of God, then pray.

If you want to sense the presence of God, then be in prayer.

Don't be surprised if God speaks to you supernaturally while you are doing what you have done a hundred times before.

III. God prepares us in the context of Promise Luke 1:13-17

Slide 6: wedding ring (on or off finger... I don't care) idea is that it is a gift of promise through which one speaks to another.

- A. First the promises were to Zachariah vv13
 1. Your wife will bear a son
 2. You will give him the name John (God is Gracious)
 3. He will be a joy and a delight to you.
 4. Many will rejoice at his birth

- B. The second promises were about John v15
 1. He will be great in the sight of the Lord
 2. He will be set apart as unto God
 - a. Maybe as a priest on duty

Slide 7: Lev 10:8-9a end with the words... or you will die.

- b. Maybe as a Nazirite - Samson

Slide 8: Judges 13:5b start at... " the boy is to be a Nazirite thru the end of verse 5

- 3. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth
 4. He will have a ministry of restoration
 - a. He will turn many back to God
 - b. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons

Slide 9 Malachi 4:5-6

- i. Restore break with God - usually grandkids will be farther from God than Grandparents
 - ii. Restore break between fathers and children
 - ai. Godly men of the past
 - aii. Godly men of present

Teach: God prepares us for restoration in the context of promise.

Illus: Great marriage at the start - He loved his work... and never stopped. They were done. They had both made mental plans to move on... until both recognized their own sin.

Repentance was followed by promise. It worked.

Appli: In order to prepare again for Jesus' coming repent

In order to prepare again for Jesus' coming embrace His promises

- 1 John 1:9 - confess sins
- Receive forgiveness

Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear for I am with you (fear requires repentance)
 Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God (desperate for acceptance by man distances you from the presence of God)
 I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Heb 13:5 I will never desert you nor will I ever forsake you.

IV. Sometimes God Prepares Us Through Discipline Luke 1:18-20

Slide 10: kid on a chair sitting facing the corner

- A. Angel reviewed who He was
 1. I am Gabriel
 2. I stand in the presence of God

B. Gabriel reviewed why He came

1. Sent to speak to you
2. Sent to tell you good news

C. Gabriel delivered discipline

1. Zechariah should have believed (? In v 18 - a prayer not of function, but of unbelief)
2. Zechariah would be silent until John's birth (9 months)

*shifted Zachariah out of the story... it would unfold, but without his part in telling of the miracle.

Teach: God sometimes prepares us through discipline

Slide 11: Heb 12:6

Illus: Wayward sheep and broken leg - hurt it so it would not walk away, but would trust the shepherd and let him again meet the sheep's needs. He would learn not to wander again.

Appli: Accept the discipline of the Lord

'Ask whether or not some of the difficulties are linked to your unbelief or your "waywardness"

Let God prepare you to trust Him more through His tender discipline